

## Message Text

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71

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 AGR-05 SAB-01

L-03 AID-05 EB-07 IO-13 USIA-06 COME-00 TRSE-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01 /085 W

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R 101720Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8723

INFO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

PANCANAL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, SENV, PN

SUBJECT: VESICULAR DISEASE LABORATORY

REFS: (A) PANAMA 3614; (B) PANAMA 3171

1. EMBASSY REQUESTS POLICY GUIDANCE FOR REPLYING TO THE OFFICIAL  
GOP REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO ESTABLISH A VESICULAR DISEASE  
LABORATORY IN THE CANAL ZONE. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS NOW SENT  
US THREE NOTES ON THIS SUBJECT (REF A) AND IS PRESSING US FOR  
A REPLY.

2. THE REQUESTED LABORATORY WOULD BE OPERATED AS A CENTRAL  
AMERICAN REGIONAL TEST CENTER FOR FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE BY THE  
PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION (PAHO) WITH UNDP FUNDING.  
INFORMAL BUT INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSIONS ON THE FEASIBILITY OF THE  
PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN HELD HERE AMONG EMBASSY, CANAL ZONE  
GOVERNMENT AND USDA REPRESENTATIVES (REF A). CONVERSATIONS  
BETWEEN PAHO AND USDA HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN HELD IN  
WASHINGTON. GOP MINAG PAREDES DISCUSSED REQUEST WITH SECAG  
BUTZ AT THEIR MAY MEETING AND SECRETARY BUTZ SUBSEQUENTLY  
GAVE USDA ENDORSEMENT TO THE PROPOSAL IN A LETTER TO THE  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE. WE ARE ADVISED THAT THE SECRETARY

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OF THE ARMY IS NOW PREPARING A REPLY TO SECRETARY BUTZ.

CANAL ZONE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE CALLED SECRETARY OF ARMY'S ATTENTION TO THE CONCERNS SPECIFIED IN REF (A) BUT SUGGEST THAT, IF IN BROADER US INTEREST TO APPROVE PROPOSAL, THE LABORATORY BE TURNED OVER TO THE USDA FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FOR MAKING ARRANGEMENTS WITH PAHO.

3. GIVEN THE INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE SEVERAL USG AND INTERNATIONAL ENTITIES INVOLVED IN THIS REQUEST, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT POLICY AND TECHNICAL QUESTIONS CAN BEST BE RESOLVED BY AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP IN WASHINGTON. GOP-EMBASSY CANAL ZONE GOVERNMENT CHANNEL CAN BE USEFUL FOR WORKING LEVEL COORDINATION, BUT WE LACK THE EXPERTISE OR AUTHORITY FOR REACHING DEFINITIVE US POSITION ON SUCH QUESTIONS AS:

(A) IS A GOP NOTE THE APPROPRIATE CHANNEL FOR REQUESTING USG APPROVAL FOR SETTING UP A REGIONAL FACILITY IN THE CANAL ZONE TO BE ADMINISTERED BY AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION (10), LIKE PAHO? WOULD THE DEPARTMENT PREFER THAT THE 10 MAKE A DIRECT APPROACH TO THE DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON? IF THE GOP APPROACH IS DEEMED APPROPRIATE, WHAT ACTION SHOULD THE EMBASSY TAKE ON RECEIVING SUCH NOTES?

(B) CAN THE USG, THROUGH IS MEMBERSHIP IN PAHO AND/OR BY CONDITIONS SPECIFIED FOR THE APPROVAL OF THIS PROJECT, INSURE THAT USG STANDARDS AND NORMS WILL BE EMPLOYED IN THE OPERATON OF THE REQUESTED LABORATORY IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF ACCIDENTAL CONTAMINATION AS A RESULT OF LAB OPERATIONS?

(C) IF YOUR RESPONSE TO THIS OR SIMILAR REQUESTS IS AFFIRMATIVE, WHAT DETAILS WOULD CZ AND EMBASSY OFFICIALS BE EXPECTED TO WORK OUT WITH THE GOP AND 10'S AND WHAT WOULD BE RESOLVED WITH 10 OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON, WITH ADVICE TO US IN PANAMA?

4. THE EMBASSY DELIVERED AN INTERIM REPLY TO THE GOP ADVISING THAT THE REQUEST IS RECEIVING CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BY THE USG.

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5. COMMENT: CT RECOMMENDS USG GIVE SERIOUS AND CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THE REQUEST. IN ADDITION TO MERITS FOR HELPING KEEP CA FREE OF AFTOSA, POLITICAL FACTOR OF PERSONAL COMMITMENT BY MINAG PAREDES INDUCES US TO RECOMMEND FAVORABLE USG DECISION. PAREDES MEETING WITH SECRETARY BUTZ LAST MAY ENCOURAGED HIM TO EXPECT FAVORABLE USG RESPONSE; AND, BASED ON THAT MEETING AND FAITH PAREDES EXPRESSES IN

SECRETARY, BUTZ, PAREDES PERSONALLY ENGINEERED GOP AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT PROGRAM ON MEAT. WE BELIEVE FAVORABLE DECISION ON LAB WILL FACILITATE OUR ON-GOING RELATIONS WITH MINAG ON WIDE RANGE OF COMMODITY AND ASSISTANCE QUESTIONS. MOREOVER, A NEGATIVE RESPONSE COULD HAVE REPERCUSSIONS THROUGHOUT CENTRAL AMERICA AS PAREDES HAS REPORTEDLY CALLED FOR A MEETING OF CA AG MINISTERS TO DISCUSS LACK OF USG MOVEMENT ON THIS PROPOSAL (SEE REFTEL B) AND TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE SITES IN LIGHT OF USG INACTION. SELECTION OF AN ALTERNATE SITE IN CA WOULD SOLVE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH LOCATION OF LABORATORY IN CANAL ZONE BUT WILL LEAVE SECRETARY BUTZ' CONCERNS ABOUT ADEQUATE USG OVERSIGHT AND CONTROL OF FACILITIES UNATTENDED. JORDEN

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